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The construction of the mental space in the Land of Dorna

Izabela Amalia MIHALCA¹

Abstract

There are few studies, in specialized literature, regarding the construction of geographical mental spaces as „land”, in which qualitative methods were used. Therefore the need to extend this spectrum and to introduce new visions, regarding these spaces, is desirable in geographical research. The use of the qualitative method within this study aimed to identify, as true and as accurate as possible, the perception of the inhabitants of the Land of Dorna, considering the six dimensions, which compose the structure of a geographical mental space, and to highlight the way Land of Dorna’s mental space was formed. For data collection the method of the individual semi-structured interview was used, on a sample of 30 subjects. For data processing OSR NVivo 7 program was used. With the aid of this program, in the end, the result turned out to be, the model of the construction of the Land of Dorna’s mental space. Out of this, one characteristic stood out, that the elements of highest importance for the inhabitants of the Land of Dorna, are the Divinity and the house. There are interrelations amongst the six dimensions. The results of the research can be used, in the future, in order to develop other models on geographical mental spaces as *land*.

Keywords: the Land of Dorna; geographical mental space; qualitative study; identity; modernity; structure; collective identity

Introduction

The study of *geographical spaces* in specialized literature, evoked the interest of many researchers, therefore becoming a -sin que non- concept, an accurate analysis of a territory can be accomplished, regardless of the type of the approach: classic, neo-positivist, radical or behavioral (Bailly and Benguin, 1998, *apud* Cocean, 2010: 59). Regional Geography has assigned, in its panoply of utensils,

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an important place for this concept, being treated as a condition for the manifestation of the geographical phenomena and processes, and not just as a simple back up for these (Cocean, 2010: 58).

One direction that takes shape within Geography, more and more, is that of the *mental spaces*, which represent „a territory that is integrated, by a community, or by an individual belonging to it, in its own scale of existential values, through perception (l'espace perçu), experience (l'espace vécu) and imagination (the imagined space - l'espace conçu)” (Cocean, 2010: 64). Thus, researchers such as Lefebvre (1974), Yi Fu Tuan (1974), Claval, (1993), Cocean (1997, 1999-2000), Fremont (1999, 2001) etc. were able to introduce, into the geographical research, concepts like: *perceived space* (l'espace perçu) that represents „the image that an individual or a community creates, regarding a place, region, according to his own way of reflection, on sensory and mental levels” (Cocean, 2010: 61), *experienced space* (l'espace vécu) „combines the concepts of the space of living and of the social space, granting them psychological values that are attached to the place” (Fremont, 1976, 1999, *apud* Cocean, 2010: 62), the *imagined space* (l'espace conçu) „it arises from the information intercepted by the individual, from various sources (bookish, media, oral descriptions) but also from the figment of his imagination” (Cocean, 2010: 63), *regional space*, that includes all the above displayed spaces, the *geographical mental space* as „*land*” (a genuine Romanian concept introduced in scientific literature by P., Cocean, 1997: 41), in which the spiritual valences outrank the material valences, valences that are found in a stable equilibrium and in harmony. Concerns regarding the definition of the mental space concept existed throughout time in other sciences such as psychology, sociology, biology, literature etc., but with very different connotations that those of the geographical mental space (see Fauconnier, 1985; Mark et. al., 1999; Tversky, 2003; Brandt, 2005).

Within the *geographical mental spaces*, we can identify, in hierarchical order, the following types of spaces: *national*, *provincial*, *ethnographical* (as „*land*”), *habitational*, and concurrently with the development of the big cities, the *metropolitan mental space* emerges (Cocean, 2010: 67). Therefore, all four levels are subordinated one to another: the *geographical mental space* as „*land*” consists of several *habitational mental spaces*: Coșna – [„coșnean”], Vatra Dornei – [„dornean”], Iacobeni – [„iacobenean”] etc., just as within the *provincial mental spaces*, several *ethnographical mental spaces* can be found: the province of Transilvania – Land of Bârsei, Land of Hașeg, Land of Năsăud etc. The *national mental space* includes all three mental spaces mentioned above. This study will focus on the investigation of the *geographical mental spaces* as “*lands*”, having the Land of Dorna as case study.

The interest in studying a geographical mental space as “*land*”, in this case the Land of Dorna (Cârlibaba, Ciocănești, Coșna, Dorna Arini, Dorna Candrenilor, Iacobeni, Panaci, Poiana Stampei, Șaru Dornei, Vatra Dornei), is based on the

desire to decipher the most intimate features of such a region, only in terms of the perception of the inhabitants. The aim of the study is to facilitate and simplify the research methodology of the geographical mental spaces as „lands”, using qualitative methods, which lead us to a clearer and deeper understanding of the experiences and perceptions of the inhabitants of such a region. The interrelation between geographical research methods and the research methods of other scientific fields (sociology, psychology, biology etc.), will lead to the strengthening of the relations of transdisciplinary, which will be in the advantage of all parties.

The *geographical mental space* as „land” represents, for this study, „a fragment of territory, of extremely various dimensions, where the real and the imaginary imbricate organically, thus, becoming a unique unmistakable entity” (Cocean, 2005: 70). Therefore, in order to identify the inner features of the Land of Dorna, we are going to analyze the six dimensions on which a *Romanian geographical mental space* (Cocean, 2004: 3-6) is build upon: the *land* (representing the supporting foundation of any Romanian territorial system, to which the individual feels attached to since ancestry), the *house* (the place where the individual experiences his first contact with the world and with the surrounding environment), the *lineage* [„neamul”] (representing the individuals who are closely related and who preserve certain specific values), the *common law* [„cutuma”] (it is represented by the elements of tradition, customs, folklore etc.), the *myth* (represents the sum of the elements that fulfill the connection between the real and the imaginary), and at

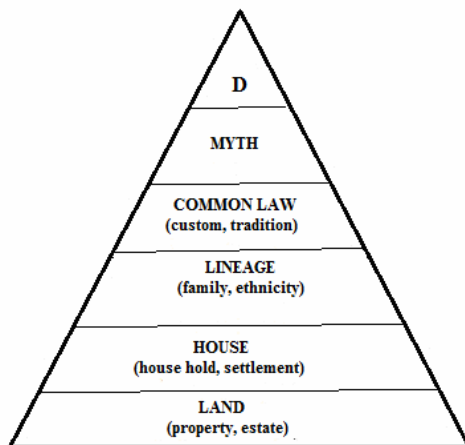


Figure 1. *The structure of the Romanian mental space* (source: Cocean, 2004: 4)

The main aim of this study is to focus on the participants and to describe the territorial realities intercepted in terms of their own perception, which leads to the forthcoming of concepts and not to their imposition. Therefore, I decided to use a qualitative approach (Grix, 2001: 33). Therefore individual semi-structured inter-

views were employed. The interview guide was elaborated based on the six dimensions of the geographical mental space as „*land*“. I want to find the way and intensity by which this dimensions are found in the consciousness of the inhabitants of the Land of Dorna. The option for the method of the individual semi-structured interview is based on its advantages: describing the spiritual values, the experiences and perceptions of the participants, creating a familiar environment, between the participant and the interviewer. This gives the opportunity to express himself freely according to the topic, without being compelled to strictly answer the predetermined question. Another advantage is that the interviewer can choose a limited range of participants, with extremely varied component parts (Rotariu & Iluț, 1997: 49-51).

Method

Participants

In order to capture the spiritual and material valences of the entire territorial system of the Land of Dorna, I included within the sample, representatives from every component locality (the average was of 3 participants per locality). Therefore, 30 people were interviewed, between the ages of 18-70 years, of which 21, between the ages of 18-59 years and 9 over the age of 60 years. Out of the 30 participants, 18 were female and 12 male, of which 25 had their residence in rural areas and 5 in urban areas. Out of the 30 participants, 2 of them had no type of educational training whatsoever, 4 of them have graduated from primary education, 5 participants have graduated from secondary education, 5 participants have graduated from 10 years of compulsory education, 8 participants have graduated from high school and 6 of them graduated from higher education (university).

Procedure

The interviews were conducted in two stages: the first stage aimed the localities positioned on the W-E axis (except Vatra Dornei city) where 13 participants were interviewed, and the second stage aimed the localities positioned on the N-S axis (where the polarizing core of the Land of Dorna region was included), where 17 interviews were conducted. The interviews were carried out individually at the homes of the participants. An oral agreement was obtained from each subject and an additional consent for the audio recording of the interview. In order to maintain the anonymity of the participants within the study, they will be mentioned as subject 1, 2...30, according to the order of the recording of the interviews. The participants had the liberty to withdraw from the interview, anytime they desired, without being obliged to justify their decision. Each participant was interviewed

once and each interviewed lasted approximately for 2 hours.. The interview guide was elaborated in order to cover all six predetermined dimensions: the land, the house, the lineage, the common law, the myth and the Divinity (Cocean, 2004: 3-6): the *land* (e.g. What does the concept of land mean to you? What specific feeling do you have while talking about this?); (2) the *house* (e.g. What does the house represent to you? How is the house linked with the family and the surroundings?); (3) the *lineage* [„*neamul*”] (e.g. What do you understand by the concept of family? What is the boundary between family and lineage?); (4) the *common law* [„*cutuma*”] (e.g. What place do traditions and habits occupy in your life? To what extent do you keep certain traditions, customs and how do you know about them?); (5) the *myth* (e.g. Have you ever used the concept of myth throughout your existence? In what way is myth integrated in your life and by what characteristics does it stand out?); (6) the *Divinity* (e.g. Which is the supreme entity in whom you believe? To what extent is Divinity involved in your life and how is this fact affecting your daily existence?).

Data Analysis

There are many different approaches to qualitative data analysis (e.g. *literal*, *interpretive*, and *reflexive*) and these have been described in the social sciences literature (Mason, 1996: 54). Whichever of these possible approaches is taken, researchers face a choice of using either manual and/or computer assisted methods in their data analysis (Bourdon, 2002: 3). Despite the existing debates on whether softwares are appropriate for this task, computers are being increasingly employed in the use of qualitative data analysis (Basit, 2003: 145), especially as today's computerized packages for qualitative analysis have become far more sophisticated than the early systems (Buchanan, Jones, 2010: 4).

For the current article I have chosen using QSR NVivo 7. This software is included in the big family of CAQDAS that has already been employed by Romanian social scientists on analyzing different types of data (Iovu, 2011: 133; Cojocaru & Cojocaru, 2011). Employing this tool for the current data analysis is due to its advantages such as high speed at handling volumes of data and improvement of rigor analysis (Seale, 2008: 235). But, Nvivo is more than this. It is a retrieve, code and theory building tool, allowing users to replicate all of the abilities of the manual system into the software, and much more. The software allows operating with a diversity of data sources including text, pictures, video or audio recordings. Once imported, text can be emphasized through the internal rich text editor for the manipulation of color, font and character style (Blismas, Dainty, 2003: 460). Selected data can be coded both *in vivo* and through an accumulated *tree structure*. Editing is dynamic, in that text can be edited while it is coded, and memos and comments can be added throughout. This allows for easy and progressive reflection and conceptualization (Richards, 2002: 211). In

addition, documents and nodes can have attributes attached. The use of attributes allows the integration of quantitative and demographic data which can augment the results of analysis through graph representations.

Results

The questions and the answers of the participants were grouped on each one of the six dimensions, in order to help identify the specific features of the Land of Dorna's mental space structure.

(1) *The land acquires several meanings for the inhabitants of the Land of Dorna: the first is a spiritual one in which we observe the attachment of the inhabitants [„dorneni”] to land [„glie”] and nature: I was born on this land and here is where I wish to be buried, just like my mother and father were (I 16, Male, 69 years old, rural), I have no better feeling than when I go out to work the land and afterwards come home peacefully (I 11, Male, 63 years old, rural, 8 grades); the second valence is the deep sense of property: all my life I had land which I worked on together with my family and I have not given it to anyone, except when it was taken by force (I 2, Female, 68 years old, rural, 4 grades), in the old days when the Austrians and later the Hungarians came and said that the lands and the forests were theirs, but know this, we continued to consider them as belonging to us, because our forefathers fought to give them back to us (I 5, Male, 67 years old, rural, 4 grades); the third valence he receives, is that of the fortune, understanding at this point the origin of the pride of the Land of Dorna inhabitants, the more land they possess, the prouder and more self-secure they become: I received my land as an inheritance and I kept it, I will do the same in my turn (I 18, Male, 67 years old, rural, 4 grades), my grandparents lived on this land and they came from a great family, then it passed over to my mother and now it is mine. I do not wish to sell it for I like it here (I 21, Male, 47 years old, rural, 10 grades); fourthly, the land is regarded as a reservoir of raw material: the crops the land gave us was all that we had (I 22, Female, 62 years old, rural, 8 grades), when I worked in the mine I lived a better life, for we dug them out and we had money, but not we don't have anything (I 5, Male, 67 years old, rural, 4 grades), do you know how did some people make fortunes here? By exploiting the forest and by selling off the wood. Us, who have worked in the mine, we do not have that much money (I 6, Male, 59 years old, rural, 8 grades). All these are „crowned” with the attributes of solidarity towards fellow neighbors and hardworking, I never said no to work, not even when neighbors asked me to help them*

and so they helped me back (I 5, Male, 67 years old, rural, 4 grades), *when I was young I used to go out to work with the hay at my friends and after we were done, we would eat and drink together* (I 17, Male, 64 years old, rural, 4 grades). The connection between the [„dornean”] peasant and the *land* is permanent (from birth till death), being unique through personal perceptions and feelings, *one of my favorite things was to work the land and to take care of the cows out on the fields, where I could feel free* (I 18, Male, 67 years old, rural, 4 grades), the feeling of unsettlement becoming an impossibility, *they wanted to take me to Dorna but I told them that I could not live in a block of flats, without being able to do some work out in the field* (I 10, Female, 61 years old, rural).

(2) For the inhabitants of the Land of Dorna, *the house* represents the essential place: *the place where I was born and where I lived for my entire life* (I 1, Female, 56 years old, rural, 8 grades), *the house is the place where I lived with my brother, with my sisters and with my parents* (I 6, Male, 59 years old, rural, 8 grades), the place where he developed as an individual and where all the values of the homeland (house, yard, street etc.) were inspired to him: *the place where I grew up as a child and where I learned how to do household chores. This is the way I did things in my own home as well and now I can be proud of the fact that I am hard-working* (I 15, Female, 57 years old, rural, 8 grades). In the same time, the house represents the „unity of the family”, the spiritual cohesion of the entire household, where the relations between its members is being formed in a harmonious way: *when we used to gather inside the house every evening, to eat together, we used to have a quiet and relaxing time, we could talk and we could feel protected. That was the time when father used to join us, it was nice* (I 24, Female, 43 years old, rural, 12 grades), *home is where the house of my parents is and it is the place where I go to visit them* (I 13, Female, 39 years old, rural, university). In the mentality of every inhabitant, the house and the household represents the main point where he is able to feel secure and where he creates his own universe and his own mental images regarding the meaning of that „unique” place for him: *I know when we used to play with the children from our neighborhood and they were coming to our yard as well, and we always thought that our place is better an nicer compared to others* (I 8, Female, 30 years old, rural, university), *I will never forget the house, the streets and the landscape where I grew up, even if now I am living in the city. Sometimes I miss those times...* (I 29, Female, 52 years old, urban, university).

(3) *The lineage* [„neamul”] is perceived by most participants as being composed by all the inhabitants who claim the appellative of [„dornean”] and who share a common history: *the people from Coșna are related to us, just as the people from Țibău, we all belong to the same lineage* [„neam”], *because we all fought together* (I 16, Male, 69 years old, rural), *from the top of the mountain and down to the valley, we all are* [„dorneni”]. *This has always been like that and it will always be* (I 4, Female, 58 years old, rural, 10 grades); others perceived that family is consisted of their own relatives: *the relatives from our lineage* [„neamul”] *are called Todereni and we are all proud of this* (I 21, Male, 47 years old, rural, 10 grades), *Mărie, who lives down the street, is related to my husband and her husband was a descendant of the Buzilă lineage* [„neam”] (I 2, Female, 68 years old, rural, 4 grades). Therefore, the [„dorneni”] are both the people living on the top of the mountain and the ones living down in the creep or in the valley.

(4) Besides belonging to a family, to a lineage [„neam”], to the land and to a household, the inhabitants of the Land of Dorna are still preserving the old values and customs unchanged, represented by *the common law*. Specific elements that regard the *common law* [„cutuma”], are still preserved, especially in the rural environment: *here in the city, we no longer dress in traditional national costumes, but if you go especially to the villages, when there is a traditional holiday, you will see people still dressing up in them* (I 26, Female, 19 years old, urban, 12 grades), *when I lived at the house of my parents, my mother always made us dress with the traditional costumes in order to go to church, since we moved here we never used those costumes again. Young people from the cities no longer respect the traditions and the customs, maybe only on the special days of the city, but only as a fake image and fake pride* (I 29, Female, 52 years old, urban, university). The secular traditions, such as those concerning sheep breeding, cowherding, crop gathering, are preserved to this day: *nowadays, the cowherders are going with the cows and with the sheep on Saint Gheorghe Day, up in the mountains, and they are doing there the measurements* [„măsurătoarea”]. *I don't have cows because I am old but the other neighbors still do and they send them out* (I 16, Male, 69 years old, rural), *the shepherds and cowherders spend the entire summer there, after that they descend in the fall. Nowadays young people do not want such jobs anymore* (I 22, Female, 62 years old, rural, 8 grades).

(5) The dimension of the *myth* is added as well, to the things mentioned above, which in the Land of Dorna is represented by the undead, ghosts

[„strigoi”], that are evil creatures, all being transposed especially in local legends: *who has not heard of the old lady living at the end of the village? She can do anything, to heal or to ruin you* (I 12, Female, 47 years old, rural, 10 grades), *when I was little they were talking about the ghost that haunted Ursului house, down in the valley, and all the children were curious about what was really happening there* (I 20, Female, 40 years old, rural, 12 grades). Myth is a part of the lives of the inhabitants of the Land of Dorna, being also a part that includes legends, the spectacular and the supranatural: *I grew up with stories about ghosts and werewolves, my grandmother used to tell us stories all the time, whatever she knew from her mother* (I 3, Female, 34 years old, rural, 12 grades). The traditions and customs of the inhabitants of the Land of Dorna, which have taken the form of songs, legends etc., were passed from generation to generation: *I learned to sing when I was little, my mother had a notebook with lots of song in it, songs from our region, written down. I learned them while listening to her singing. I taught my little girl to sing as well. Her grandmother made her a sheepskin coat* (I 19, Female, 37 years old, rural, 10 grades), *I learned to [„bucinesc”] a long time ago, when my father took me with him to the mountains to take care of the animals* (I 23, Male, 34 years old, rural, university), *I sometimes take my little boy with me out in the forest, and he sees what I do there, so maybe one day he will have the same occupation* (I 9, Male, 35 years old, rural, 10 grades), *my grandfather taught me how to dance [„să horesc”], but since we moved to the city I do not do it anymore and I forgot how to* (I 27, Male, 21 years old, urban, 12 grades).

(6) The involvement of the *Divinity* in the lives of the inhabitants of the Land of Dorna and the faith they show, it is observed from their answers: *we always had icons in our house* (I 26, Female, 19 years old, urban, 12 grades), *even though we live in the city, when we enter into a church we always put on a kerchief* (I 29, Female, 52 years old, urban, university), *this is how we all were taught to do, to go to church and to worship God* (I 25, Female, 27 years old, rural, university), *God is the greatest power and He protects us from all adversities, if we don't believe in him then in who else can we place our trust in?* (I 15, Female, 57 years old, rural, 8 grades), *I pray every day for my family and for their welfare* (I 2, Female, 68 years old, rural, 4 grades).

Based on their answers, results show that the inhabitants of the Land of Dorna sum up the experiences and emotions of a people [„a unui neam”] which is bound by a common history and evolution, in which all the elements (social, economic,

traditions, habits, crafts etc.) are found in an organic harmony. All these elements and characteristics form the collective identity of the [„*dornean*] community that is important for the substantiation of the local territoriality (Popa, 2000: 91). As the collective identity stays unaltered, more preserved and rooted it becomes (Nevola, 2011: 18). The relationship of cooperation between all the six dimensions of the Land of Dorna's mental space, leads to the preservation of the local identity and of its specific characteristics. Popa, 2000: 91, considers that the „lands” represents the skeleton of the Romanian territoriality and identity, being the purest form.

Discussion

The questions underlying this research are: to what extent the six dimensions of the geographical mental space (as „land”), can be found in the consciousness of the inhabitants of the Land of Dorna and which one is more important? To what extent the structure of the Land of Dorna's mental space coincides with that of other mental spaces from Romania?

After analyzing the data, it was outlined that age, environment and education are directly related with the perception of the inhabitants of the Land of Dorna, concerning the *land*. The participants under 40 years, that have more advanced educational training (high school or university) and are living in the urban area or have a constant connection with it (by commuting to work and spending a long period of time in the city etc.), do not feel attached to the land in any way. While the participants from the rural areas (19 out of 20 participants asserted that they perceive the land in a certain way) most of them over 50 years (14 participants, 6 of them aged over 35 years) and with a minimum level of education (2 participant do not have any type of education, while 14 graduated 4, 8 or 10 grades; 3 graduated high school and 1 graduated the university), perceive the land and they feel attached to it through different ways: either they perceive it as a reservoir of resources for the local specific economical activities, or as a property, as a fortune, or as birth place or natural environment. All this feelings and emotions concerning the land, spring out of the lifestyle and way of being of the [„*dornean*”], out of the traditional way of living, perpetuated along time and which was not yet replaced. *The land*, in the structure of the Romanian mental space, has a special significance, being the foundation of all „land” [„*tară*”] type entities. Therefore, the land, for the inhabitants of another geographical mental space, for the [„*năsăudenii*”], it represents a „[...] pillar that supports the identity, as well as the Romanian way of living from these places” (Ilovan, 2009: 113). For most communities located in the geographical mental spaces as „land”, the land represents firstly, the place where they were born and the place where they will return at the end of the „journey”.

27 out of 30 participants in this study, stated that they feel attached to the *house* under various forms, while 3 of them (all male), stated that they do not consider the dimension of the house as an important element in their lives, other elements being more important (the land, the common law etc.). Out of the 3 participants, subject number 27, does not consider any of the six dimensions that form the structure of the Land of Dorna's mental space, as being important. Male respondents perceive the house as the place where they were born and where they grew up being more attached to the perimeter of the household. While for all female participants the house has an important role within their lives because of the fact that it is perceived as being the central place where relationships within the *family* are being developed. Ties within a family are considered to be the most powerful influence in the formation of the individual. The sense of safety (belonging) regarding the house is also given by the traditions, customs, and actions that tie a community (Anderson, 2010: 104). The dimension of the house is also important for other geographical mental spaces from Romania, in this sense, Nicoleta David, 2010, claims that for the inhabitants of the Land of Zarand, the house „[...] means stability, order, the place where the fundamental things of life are placed, birth, the formation and affirmation of the individual, marriage and death” (Nicoleta David, 2010: 61). In this sense, it can be seen how important is the place occupied by the dimension of the house within the construction of a mental space (as „land”) and its priority in forming and defining of the individual and subsequently of the entire local community.

Regarding the affiliation to the *lineage* [„*neam*”), 18 participants consider this dimension as part of their own being and of their own identity, being perceived as the entity that forms a family (relatives), as well as the inhabitants who claim the appellative of [„*dornean*”). While 12 of the participants believe that this dimension does not influence, in any way, their existence as individuals in the community in which they live. These 12 participants, aged under 50 years, have a higher education (12 classes or university). The lineage [„*neamul*”) is a relevant dimension, which confers an identity within the Land of Moșilor as well, where the lineage is regarded as a „group of individuals belonging to a particular family tree” (Boțan, 2010: 448) being highlighted by a series of unique features of the [„*moșilor*”) space. The long historical evolution (specific to the communities within the geographical mental spaces of Romania), strengthens the affiliation of the individuals to a community which uses the same language, same customs, same traditions etc., and which in the end, form a lineage [„*neam*”) (where the inhabitants claim an appellative: [„*dornean*”), [„*maramureșean*”), [„*oșean*”) etc., thus being the common significance of all geographical mental spaces).

Regarding the *common law* [„*cutuma*”) dimension represented by local traditions and customs specific to the region of the Land of Dorna, 25 of the participants (16 female and 9 male) are preserving certain secular traditions of the region and they believe that maintaining and respecting those elements, even by

the young generation, is important for the perpetuation of local identity. The area of residence and the age, influences the perception of these values. In conclusion, those aged over 35 years especially from the rural areas perceive the common law [„*cutuma*”] as an important part of their lives and as an element which shapes them as individuals. While the participants under the age of 35 years believes that these values are outdated, focusing on other practices and interests (e.g. *When I was little I had a traditional costume that I would wear when going to church with my grandmother, but now I would never wear something like that again ... for all my friends would laugh at me and because in the city you have to dress up fashionable, in order to have friends* (I 26, Female, 19 years old, urban, 12 grades), *when there is a certain holiday or a traditional manifestation in our city, we gather together with the friends and we mock those performing on the stage, saying that they all are just some peasants... then they sing folklore music and they dress up with traditional costumes, they manufacture different kind of objects and we do not like or enjoy this stuff anymore* (I 27, Male, 21 years old, urban, 12 grades). Common law [„*cutuma*”] is specific to other geographical mental spaces as „land” such as Bârsei Land (the fairs, traditional dances, traditional costumes, festivals etc.) where the author identified the fact that alongside tradition, an important role, in defining the mental traits of the community mentality is also played by „a certain way of seeing life, of behaving in relationships with others, a certain lifestyle” (Pop, 2011: 148). Therefore, it can be stated that the role of common law [„*cutumă*”] within every geographical mental space, is different, as far as the forming of the identity of each region is regarded.

The final dimension, regarding its importance in the formation of the Land of Dorna mental space, is that of the *myth*, thus 17 of the participants believe that this dimension affects the perception of the space in which they live and the way of how it is perpetuated within the mental community. Age, place of residence and education affects the way of living and the way how a [„*dornean*”] individual perceives things. Therefore, as the participants possess a higher level of education and as they are younger, they perceive differently the importance of the myth as opposed to those who received a traditional education and have lived in a traditional environment their entire lives. The *myth*, as a component of the structure of the Romanian mental space it is to be found in the Land of Moșilor under the form of [„*vâlve*”], legends, ghosts, dragons etc. (Boțan, 2010: 449), which shows a similarity between the two regions.

The *Divinity*, within the Land of Dorna’s mental space outperforms the other 5 dimensions. Thus 29 of 30 participants, in the study, believe that Divinity occupies an important place in their lives, guiding their lives according to religious doctrines. Keeping the religious customs, from ancient times, the high frequency of participation in religious services, the formation of the individual in a traditional society using traditional values (25 of the participants are living in rural areas and 4 participants that are living in the city have deep roots in the rural areas) led to

the unaltered preservation of the faith of the [„*dorneni*”]. As it can be observed, characteristics such as gender, age or education does not influence the level of faith of the inhabitants of the Land of Dorna. The results of the study regarding the 6th dimension proved that the inhabitants of the Land of Dorna as well, align themselves to the structure of other mental spaces from within Romania. Ana Neli Ianăș, 2011, proved the fact that, an important feature for the identity of the inhabitants of the Land of Almăjului, is their belief through religion and through the church, faith being „an expression of the human need to find a path to achieve reconciliation and stability in his existence in this world” (Berne, 2006: 68, *apud.* Ianăș, 2011: 79). *Divinity* plays an important role in the existence of each community within the geographical mental spaces of Romania as evidenced by „[...] the well known gesture of the Romanian peasant, whom before going into a journey or before starting any kind of labor, he makes, a wide sign of the cross saying and says: God be good to me!” (Cocean, 2005: 73).

The behavior and mentality of the rural communities are different from those of the urban communities, through the way of evolution and through the influence of the inner or external factors, which lead to major differences (Petkov, 2007: 30). This is the reason why the differences between the answers given by the inhabitants of the Land of Dorna, concerning the six dimensions of the structure of the [„*doranean*”] mental space, are so varied. As we have seen previously, the way of perceiving these six dimensions is influenced by the background of each participant. Most differences are related to age, residency and education of the inhabitants. Therefore, those aged less than 35 years, living especially in the city and having a higher education, perceive certain dimensions of the mental space structure differently from those aged over 35 years, who come from the rural areas and do not possess a higher education.

According to Giddens, A. (1990: 7) modernity is a double-edged phenomenon: positive if you look at all the development occurred in the socio-economical sectors and negative because it changes the traditional values of the community. Such changes have occurred in the Land of Dorna to, due to the influence of the cosmopolite factor (Cocean, 2011: 41). This is the consequence of the external influences, which occurred during the last decades (the introduction and promotion of new values acquired from the external space, either under spiritual or physical forms: the impact of media sources – television, radio, newspapers, magazines etc., supporting a series of false „patterns” to which the ordinary population can not reach easily), which are passed on to the segment of the population aged between 18-40 years, which has already begun to adopt other values than those specific to the Land of Dorna’s mental space.

By using the model generated by Nvivo, it resulted that there are interrelations amongst all six dimensions (the land, the house, the lineage, the common law, the myth and Divinity), which form the structure of the Land of Dorna’s mental

space, but the most significant for the inhabitants of the Land of Dorna were dimensions 2 and 6 (the house and Divinity). According to Holloway and Valinis, (2002: 6), religion, faith (Divinity) and spirituality occupy a central place in the life of a person, are essential in establishing his identity as an individual and, after that, for the community to which it belongs to. At the same time, religious doctrine affect the time management, spatial movements and behavior of believers leaving an imprint on the landscape and lifestyle (Park, 2004: 2).

Conclusions

The responses of the 30 subjects interviewed in this study showed that two of the dimensions that constitute the structure of the Land of Dorna's mental space are more representative to them. The perception of the two dimensions (*the house* and *Divinity*), as the most important dimensions for the inhabitants of the Land of Dorna, comes from the fact that the studied region is located within the historical province of Bucovina. There traditions regarding faith and religion (Divinity) are still persisting, from ancient times and they are perpetuated by each generation, in turn, without removing old habits and religious rituals. Related to the religious doctrines (the place of woman in society etc.), specific to the Land of Dorna, is the role of the *house* and of the family in the lives of the inhabitants, and this is the explanation for the attachment and of the perception of the participants regarding this dimension. In conclusion, the *structure of the Land of Dorna's mental space*, coincides to that of other mental geographical spaces from Romania, identified by Cocean, 1997, the only difference amongst them being the place occupied by each dimension within the community and the manner and intensity of perception of the six dimensions by the inhabitants of a particular region.

Due to the reduced number of interviewed subjects the generated conclusions can not be transferred to the entire territory of the Land of Dorna. Therefore to observe the viability and the evolution of the acquired model, I wish to increase, in the future, the number of participants from the Land of Dorna and to include individuals under 18 years (to see if and to what extent, the attachment and perceptions of the Divinity and of the house is perpetuated from generation to generation). Using Geographical Informational Systems (G.I.S.) (see Pickles, 1995) I will try to represent the future results that I will obtain. Also a mixt design will increase the validity of the results.

The model of the structure of the Land of Dorna's mental space generated as a result of this study can represent a landmark for future studies that identify the primary dimensions of the mental space as „land”.

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